

Reasons for not listening to the radio outside of Sunday morning

- "I have to do the shopping"
- "I don't like to miss the late night television programmes"
- "I like to go out on a Saturday night"
- "There are only stations active on a Sunday morning"
- "Everybody knows that Free Radio is only once a week from 1000-1400"
- "I like to wash the car or cut the lawn at other times"

These are some of the things that have been said both to us and some of the Free Radio operators to whom we have spoken about why some listeners only tune in to the pirates on a Sunday morning. Perhaps the real reasons are as follows . . .

- "I am too stupid to bother to tune around at other times because stations have always broadcast on a Sunday morning"
- "I never bother to listen at other times because I'm not really interested in Free Radio"
- "I only listen out on a Sunday morning because this is the time I know I will be able to hear stations which makes collecting QSL cards nice and easy"

Do yourself a favour, don't just listen on Sunday mornings - be a real listener and listen at other times as well.

PIRATE CHAT

The ONLY magazine to reflect the true pirate scene

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CAN NOW ONLY BE CONTACTED VIA:
c/o SRS, Ostra Porten 29, 442 54 Ytterby, Sweden

PIRATE CHAT

continues

The Free Radio scene sees a new lease of life . . .

76 metres flourishes with activity from across Europe

The new generation of stations desert 48 metres

PC skips into summer

free radio news
and features

PIRATE CHAT

PIRATE CHAT is produced for worldwide distribution with readers all over the world as far away as the USA, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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ADVERTISING

Small non-profit making adverts can be placed in the magazine free of charge. Money making promotions will cost a small amount and for these, the editor should be contacted.

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Deadline for next issue contributions:
Friday 30th August

THE return of Pirate Chat with the last issue proved to be somewhat of a surprise for many of you as it had widely been thought that we would never grace the Free Radio scene again; however, we are back for good and this issue just goes to prove the fact.

Since that return issue the international pirate scene on shortwave has seen some quite interesting and dramatic developments. Although the hardcore group of 48 metre band stations continue to broadcast in their own imitable way, the new generation of stations have been establishing 76 metres. It is now possible to hear transmissions every day of the week, with programmes, this adding a further and much needed dimension to the European scene. A look at the SW section or the new SW Diary will give a clear picture of exactly what's been going on.

This issue also gives the usual FM and MW news, as well as some exclusive features which will hopefully succeed in opening a new avenue to the way in which you perceive pirate broadcasting. It is all very well to read station logs and news but it is not until you read articles detailing behind the scenes that the concept becomes even more illuminating. The success of the stories regarding my last trip to the Netherlands proved this fact in the last issue and this time a profile on the hugely under-estimated *Radio Armadillo* and a report on my recent visit to *Live Wire Radio* will hopefully succeed in doing this once again. A fine article regarding shortwave receivers and antennas will hopefully also serve to be of use.

Your comments on this issue are most welcome and could be printed in the next issue just as some have been printed in this one.

All the best - Ed.

UK FM NEWS

Pirate Chat

Information
from the last
two months
unless other-
wise stated

Compiled by The Chief Editor

LONDON and SURROUNDING AREAS

MHZ	STATION	FREQUENCY	STYLE
87	PLEASURE	87.70	House / garage
	SUB-BASS	87.70	Jungle
	FEELIN'	87.90	Jungle
88	UNDERGROUND	88.05	Jungle / house etc
	24 / 7	88.10	House / garage
	CONFLICT	88.40	Jungle
89	SUNRISE	88.40	General dance
	LONDON UNDERGROUND	89.40	House / garage
	INDULGENCE	89.60	House etc
90	STATION	89.80	Soul / reggae
	FREEDOM	90.00	Jungle
	SOUL	90.20	Dance
91	PHASE or FACE?	90.40	Jungle / house etc
	ACTIVE	90.65	House / garage
	LIGHTNING	90.75	Soul / reggae
92	GENESIS	91.60	Reggae
	RINSE	91.80	Jungle
	POWERJAM	92.00	Soul / reggae
93	KICK	92.30	House / garage / jungle
	GROOVE	92.55	Soul / jazz
	SEX	92.60	Dance
94	BUZZ	92.90	Soul / reggae
	VIBES	93.85	Soul / reggae
	JUICE	94.00	House / garage
95	STOMPIN'	94.20	House
	KOOL	94.50	Jungle
	ELITE	95.50	Soul / reggae
96	DREAM	96.20	House / reggae etc
	CARIBE	96.60	Reggae / soul
	JOY	97.85	Dance
97	BASSLINE	97.90	Soul / reggae
	DEJA-VU	98.20	House / garage

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	FUTURE	99.20	<i>Jungle</i>
	RAGGA	99.60	<i>Soul / reggae / ragga</i>
100	PRESSURE	100.35	<i>Jungle</i>
101	UNIQUE	101.25	<i>Soul</i>
	ERUPTION	101.30	<i>Jungle</i>
	FREAK	101.80	<i>House / garage</i>
104	RUDE	104.20	<i>Jungle</i>
	EUPHORIA	104.40	<i>House / garage / techno</i>
	PURE	104.90	<i>House / garage</i>
105	GALAXY	105.10	<i>Soul / reggae</i>
106	FORCE	106.55	<i>Jungle / happy hardcore</i>
	NUT NUT	106.80	<i>House / garage</i>
	SELECTION	106.80	<i>House / garage</i>
	JOY (possibly)	106.85	<i>70s music / offshore jingles</i>
107	RISK	107.05	<i>House / garage / jungle</i>
	BEAT	107.15	<i>Soul / reggae</i>
	TRANSMISSION ONE	107.35	<i>Jungle</i>
	DREAM	107.60	<i>Happy hardcore / jungle</i>
	DON	107.95	<i>Jungle</i>

THE London scene continues to be dominated by the jungle fraternity and although the trend can become too repetitive, the sheer number of stations on air is encouraging. That is

not to say that the format is wrong; in fact, some of the stations such as GROOVE are particularly innovative. One station that was a little out of the norm was JOY; as you will see from

the above, this one was active with offshore jingles and such like, something very rarely heard in the Capital.

Southern correspondent

WEST MIDLANDS

89	SANGAM	89.95	<i>Longest serving Asian station in the Birmingham area</i>
101	UNITY	101.50	<i>Dance, jungle etc</i>
103	PCRL	103.45	<i>Recently featured in a Radio 5 Live documentary</i>
105	PREMIER	105.20	<i>Weekend reggae, ragga and soul</i>
	ENJOY	105.70	<i>Stereo relays of German station</i>
	CRYSTAL	105.80	<i>Dance</i>
106	SUPREME	106.00	<i>Dance and pop station</i>
	SANGEET	106.10	<i>Asian recently taken off air</i>
	FRONTLINE	106.30	<i>Daily reggae and soul</i>
	JUICE	106.80	<i>Occasional dance etc</i>
	MIDLANDS		
	UNDERGROUND	106.80	<i>Weekend jungle</i>
107	DUB	107.10	<i>Daily reggae and soul</i>

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

87	HEATWAVE	87.90	<i>Reggae</i>
105	CENTRE	105.70	<i>Mainly weekly, Thursday evenings</i>
106	BREEZE	106.20	<i>Weekly broadcasts - Tuesdays</i>
	BUZZ	106.50	<i>Regular broadcasts - mainly dance</i>
	STAR	106.55	<i>Occasional broadcasts</i>
107	CITY	107.70	<i>Weekly, Thursday evenings</i>
	CASTLE	107.90	<i>Weekly, Thursday evenings</i>

LEICESTERSHIRE

107	GENETIC	107.10	<i>Soul and reggae</i>
	FRESH	107.50	<i>Soul and reggae</i>
	MIX	107.70	<i>Dance, jungle etc</i>

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

105	JOY	105.80	<i>Rave, house, garage, jungle etc</i>
106	UNDERGROUND	106.20	<i>Previously FREEDOM, recently returned following raid</i>
107	FOUL MOUTH	106.80	<i>Heavy rock</i>
	S.C.R.	107.20	<i>Reggae</i>
	DANCE	107.60	<i>Dance - would you believe it?!</i>

NOT quite so much information this time as perhaps we would have liked. Some of the centres of activity such as Manchester and Liverpool have been omitted simply because no news has arrived! Perhaps our contributors could try and send something ready for next time - the deadline date can be found on the inside cover.

Anyhow, from what is included this time, it is clear to see that activity is there but perhaps not at the levels of previous years. There is an addition for the West Midlands as

KOOL FM has recently returned to the air. An interesting point about this station is that is closely affiliated with the station of the same name broadcasting jungle to London on 94.50. Adverts for events in the Capital are regularly heard.

Also in the West Midlands, POWER FM are set to return soon, one of the main reggae stations in the area of several years back. Frequency will be the old 101.80.

From scanning through the parts of the band used by the pirates on FM, it is

interesting to note that with the exception of London, most can be heard at the top end, this most probably being due to the vast amount of BBC transmitters at the lower end of the scale. This, however, is the same in London, but the difference is that the sheer amount of pirates simply leads to the complete band being utilised.

For those of you interested in the FM scene, the next issue of P.C. should include a look at MIX FM, based on the Leicestershire. Warwickshire borders. ●

WHAT'S IN A SINPO?

an examination of what the universal reception reporting code really means

WE'VE all heard of the SINPO code and probably all used it at some time or another and although it informs, what does it really tell the recipient?

The code gives information about signal strength, interference, noise levels, propagation disturbance and then concludes with an overall merit. This is all very well and good, informing stations just how they have been heard. However, there are several problems with the method.

Firstly, there is no accounting for what some people might believe a good signal to be and for what others might perceive it to be. I might hear something I believe is of only an average strength, say 3 on the SINPO code, and somebody else might think it good, and thus give it a rating of 4. The same applies for all of the other features of the code. Different people all have different ways of hearing and calibrating things and this is

something that should never be forgotten. This problem alone can be quite misleading for radio station operators. For example, if a station receives a letter from say Switzerland with a SINPO of 33333 and then a letter from Scotland with a report of 44444, what does this say? Generally, reception in the latter was the best. But was this really the case? The Swiss listener might have been more critical in his analysis and thus given a harsher rating. Perhaps the Scottish listener was also harsh and the report should have been better. As you can see, differences might therefore not always be as they appear.

A further and perhaps essentially more important point is that every listener to a radio station is not using the same set-up. Not everybody has the same receiver and aerial, thus again casting a shadow over the way in which the code is used. It would be quite satisfactory if everybody used the same equipment, but

they don't, and even when people do use the same, there is nothing to say that they will both obtain the same results. Somebody who has a Sony 2001D receiver, for example, and uses a longwire antenna might record a station as having a SINPO of 44444 whereas somebody else using exactly the same might note a SINPO of 55544. Why could this be? Antenna height could be different, thus improving or degrading reception. Perhaps one of the receivers was switched to "local" mode and the other switched to "DX" mode. One of the receivers might have been "overloaded" because of the antenna, therefore creating other spurious signals, consequently detracting from the overall reception. Again, there are an infinite number of factors, all affecting what is generally perceived to be a reliable and informative code.

People will say that so long as a radio station is informed of the receiving set-up being used that the problem will be

WHAT'S IN A SINPO

Pirate Chat

counteracted but this is not necessarily so because nobody can ever be sure of how the equipment has been used.

There is no doubt that a code such as the SINPO does serve as a general indicator to how a radio station was heard, but it can never be 100% reliable because of the facts explained.

Perhaps a better method of reporting is with a recording made onto cassette tape. Apart from this more realistically informing a station operator of reception, it is also much more pleasing than a report on paper.

However, the same problems can arise with tape as with the SINPO because of the various ways in which a recording can be made. It could be made straight from the radio to a cassette deck,

or perhaps via a mixer, thus changing the sound of the recording, if not the signal and reception. However, a low recording level would be disadvantageous as it would make a station sound weaker than it actually might have been. So many variables.

A brief look at all of these problems with reporting reception does not solve anything, but might go to show that when informing a radio station how they have been heard, as many details as possible should be included.

Just because a station receives a reception report stating a weak signal does not mean to say that the signals in the air were weak, as the equipment used is particularly important.

A good antenna and receiver used in the correct way and to its

optimum is probably the best way of ensuring that something such as a SINPO is as accurate as possible, although as mentioned, it is still far from exact. A look at the article starting on page 23 might present a few good ideas regarding how to receive stations in the best ways possible.

Next time you hear a station and consider sending them a reception report, take a few minutes and think about all the factors making up the way in which you are hearing that station. These are likely to be more important than the code itself, and therefore provide vital information that should be mentioned.

If you use the best listening set-up possible in your situation and optimise its use, the SINPO code will prove more effective. ●

Vogelfreies Radio

(Radio as free as a bird)

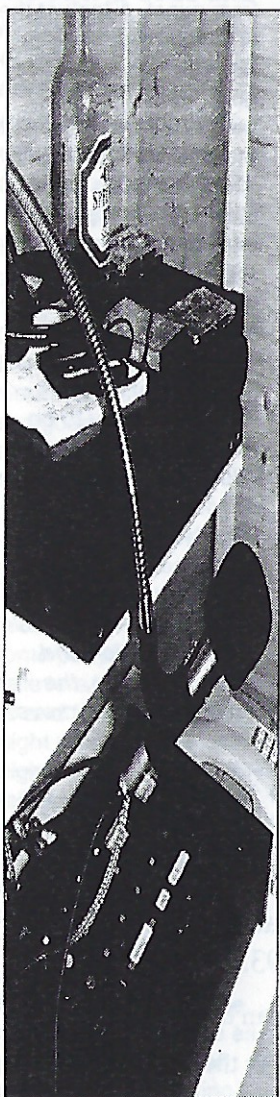
...a brand new book on shortwave pirate radio from Germany and Switzerland 1983-1993.

The book is entirely written in the German language.

For your copy... in Europe send DM30 or \$20 cash, or the equivalent in any western currency to:

Bjoern Quaack, P.O. Box 103113, 44031 Dortmund, Germany.

the LIVE WIRE meeting



Part of the studio

SOME years ago I was tuning 48 metres one Saturday night and came across a station that I believed must have been broadcasting from the street in which I was listening.

I stayed tuned and heard a loud voice announce the name DX20. After a few minutes, the signal disappeared and that was that - I was left mystified.

On June 3rd 1990 I was once again listening to the 48 metre band. It was a Sunday and the propagation was good. Moving up the band I stumbled upon a phenomenal signal on 6300 kHz. The quality was excellent. I soon found that I was listening to the first broadcast from *Live Wire Radio*. I matched the voice with that of DX20 I had heard some time earlier - this former QSO station had undergone a name change and was now a full programme station.

Since 1990 *Live Wire* has continued to power some devastating signals and modulation onto the shortwave bands - no matter what transmitter power has been used, either low or high, station operator Bill Lewis has always experienced success.

3 MHz, 4MHz, 6 MHz, 7 MHz, 15 MHz, have all housed *Live Wire* at some time and a trans-Atlantic QSO with *He-Man Radio* was a great feat achieved several years back.

Letters from all over the world have helped establish the name of *Live Wire* throughout the pirate scene and more recent transmissions on mediumwave and 76 metres have highered the station onto a pedestal as one of the finest sounding around.

On April 12th 1996, I made the trip to meet Bill Lewis at *Livewireville* for the very first time. As regular PC readers will recall, we travelled together to Holland last year to visit some of the Dutch pirates, but this meeting was the first real one at his location.

Battling through torrential rain and high winds seemed a little tedious at the time, but when I finally reached the mysterious town from which the station broadcasts, all seemed worth while.

Bill had rolled red carpet all down his street and of course, the station name was up in flashing neon above the roof which was nice to see!

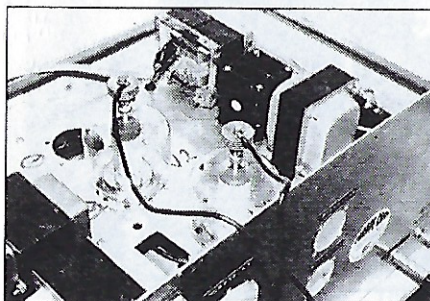
After unloading various bits and pieces from my limousine, it was off to see the newly

built shack from which the mighty *Live Wire* can be heard; the days of equipment crammed into the bedroom as was the case for the first five and a half years of the station are now gone.

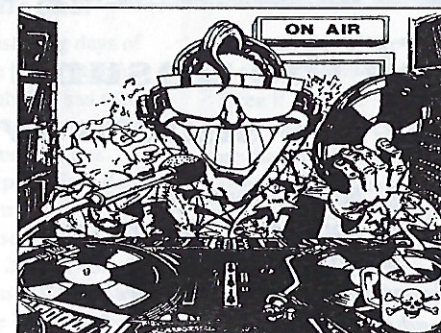
Inside the shack is a vast array of broadcasting apparatus capable of delivering the strength of signal and modulation for which the station has become synonymous. The transmitter is able to run a maximum power of 1000 watts, considerably more than most counterpart stations on the British scene, although considerably less is used most of the time.

Apart from the transmitter, the antenna system is also quite impressive. The half-wave dipole design is used, but it is the antenna mast that is most interesting. This currently stands at around 30 feet but last Christmas was considerably higher when used for the well heard mediumwave transmissions; in fact, the mast height was so great that it could be seen from a vast distance, incurring the wrath of some neighbours who complained to the local council! A letter written to Bill from the local authority led to the height being cut and the remainder of the mast now lies in a sorry state in the garden, which in itself is a further area of interest. Beneath a newly laid piece of lawn and patio lies a total of several kilometres of radial wires which are used as the earth system for the mediumwave broadcasts when a longwire antenna is used.

Seeing the studio was interesting, but more fascinating was seeing it fully operational. That was to happen in a few hours time, but firstly it was back to the motorway for a drive to another increasingly well-known shortwaver, *Radio Blackbeard*.



Part of the powerful *Live Wire* modulator



His studio cannot be missed - a huge array of aerials greet the visitor - a satellite dish, a shortwave dipole, a mediumwave dipole and various others were all on show and the operator was of course sitting at the hub of activity listening around to the bands.

Blackbeard uses somewhere in the region of 30 watts on shortwave, mainly on 76 metre Sunday morning transmissions on 3911 kHz. Although his output is considerably less than the *Live Wire*, his set-up is just as fascinating, studio equipment over-running the bedroom all serving as pointers to the typical pirate.

After a good look around on a fleeting visit, it was time for the return journey to *Livewireville*. Firstly, drinks on Bill at the local institute for shortwave psychos, and then time to blast the airwaves. As if we couldn't have guessed, propagation was a little ropy on the 76 metre band, but nevertheless, we strummed away for a few hours, entertaining ourselves if not many other people!

We had a few telephone calls from various listeners because although the band conditions were casting their evil spell over us, the sheer *Live Wire* power was proving simply too much! We couldn't go on all night though and at around 0300, we called it a day - the *Live Wire* / *Pirate Chat* rendezvous was over!

I had heard his voice many years earlier as DX20 and I had met him before, but this was the first visit to the *Live Wire* studio, the place where operator Bill Lewis sits as he transmits what is probably Europe's most prolific sounding shortwave Free Radio station. ●

Radio Armadillo -

“the unsung hero of the shortwaves”

written by
P.C. Editor

About 12 years ago a radio station hit the airwaves for the very first time. It was broadcasting on the FM waveband and probably only covering a few hundred yards. However, this was the beginning of Radio Armadillo, a now regular international broadcaster who is certainly one of the unsung heroes of the shortwaves.

The operator of the station first became involved as many others, simply listening to pirate broadcasters on the FM scene. The year was 1983 in this instance and within only a short time, he was on the air himself. The Free Radio interest had progressed to shortwave by late 1986, and looking back ten years, Mr. Armadillo recalls his favourite station as being *Radio Orion*, an influence readily detectable in his programmes nowadays.

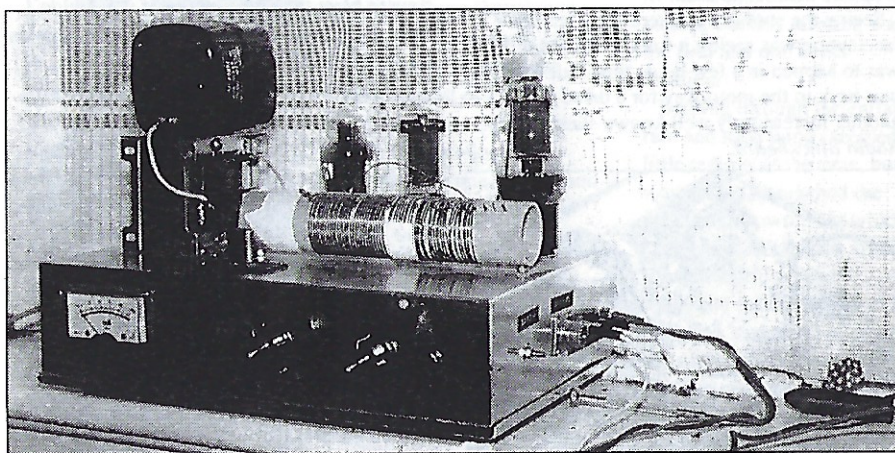
Many people will probably never have heard *Radio Armadillo*, despite the station having

been on air since November 1992. That first broadcast was made on 6292 kHz with about 15 watts of power into a longwire antenna. Signals four years ago were not the best, aerial height of only a few feet probably explaining the reason. However, a lack of letters and far from ideal broadcasting conditions have never deterred Mr. Armadillo.

In the early days, programmes mainly consisted of a diet of rock music, although this has steadily changed to what could now be described as a diverse music selection.

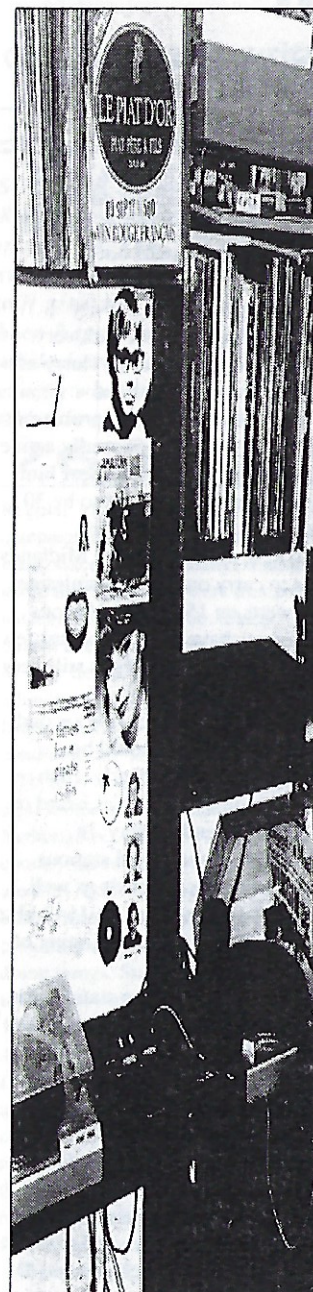
Anything from Kermit the Frog to Metallica might appear on *Armadillo*! Humour is also something for which the station is famous!

One of the broadcasts that sticks in Mr. Armadillo's mind is a QSO he had with *Live Wire Radio* in December 1992. Prior to this, he had received no letters and was unable to say whether or not his signal was getting out at all - now though, he knew that all was working. 1993 brought more success with a handful of letters - *Radio Armadillo* was fully functional.



The Radio Armadillo transmitter

Pirate Chat



The Radio Armadillo studio

From the listening days of 1983 to the progression of getting on the air had taken about ten years.

Using a more or less standard type of Free Radio shortwave transmitter, the *Armadillo* set-up runs at around the 20 watt output with famous 807 and EL84 valves. The last four years have seen various changes as far as the transmitter is concerned - some valves have been removed and other ideas have been experimented with.

Currently, *Radio Armadillo* is active on the 76 metre band after becoming disillusioned with 48 metres. One thing Mr. Armadillo did try inbetween was some transmissions on 5.8 MHz - these were heard quite well in the United Kingdom, but because few listeners check this part of the spectrum, the idea had to be abandoned.

Although a great deal of 76 metre band broadcasts over the past couple of months have hardly resulted in sacks full of mail, the station is being heard quite well by those who tune in. A new half-wave dipole antenna was recently constructed and the audio and modulation have consistently been worked upon in an attempt to improve. If you've never heard the station, now is the time to try.

The best time to hear *Radio Armadillo* is around 0030 British time on more

or less any day of the week, but always on 3947 kHz.

Even if he's not broadcasting, you can be sure that Mr. Armadillo is listening to the bands, making him one of the few people who really knows what's going on.

Asked about plans for the future he laughs and breathes a heavy sigh - Mr.

Armadillo is being heard but would desperately like some letters! Apart from wanting your mail, other plans for the station are to increase power to somewhere in the region of 50 - 100 watts. This should take place some time during the late summer and should certainly help in your reception of "The Medium A". A new antenna mast is also a possibility for the future as a higher aerial really would prove advantageous, providing a marked improvement on the current height situation.

Radio Armadillo is one of a new generation of stations - he will broadcast at any time on any day and is always interesting to listen to. If there is anything new to be tried, he will try it. How many others will make the effort to come on air on a Wednesday night or a Friday afternoon in addition to the more recognised times of Saturday night and Sunday morning?

WRITE TO: 2 Farnogue Terrace, Wexford, Republic Of Ireland. ●

The Mysterious World of Mediumwave

WELL since the last issue the European mediumwave scene has continued in its typical fashion with the Netherlands providing most activity.

Firstly from across the water, Radio Atletico who had been broadcasting on 1570 kHz has been taken off air by the Dutch authorities.

Radio Toekomst, a station people will have heard on the old 186 metres is back with his polka music and now using 1471 kHz with good signals.

A returner to the pirate scene in Holland is Commando who is back after a long lay off. International music programmes have been heard. New address here is the increasingly well-used P.O. Box 101, 7670 AC Vriezenveen.

As stated in the last issue, the 1470 kHz area is becoming increasingly popular and stations now using the area include: Pedro, Vlierfluit, Schorpioen, Boer Krelis, Ijsselstein, Pepper and Westerwolde.

The trend of changing names is as popular as ever in Holland; the following are aliases for some of the established stations: Oscar, Klokkenluider, Welbekend, Hoogland, Boemerang, Bruno, Hertog Jan, Heenij, Westerbeek, Oosterman, Jupiter, Watjesman, Zwarte Hengst, Rokkenjager, Kanibaal (B) and Blauwe Hans.

Regular listeners to the Dutch MW scene will recall Radio Bremen who used to be active regularly on 183 metres. He has been absent for a while but is hoping to return to the band in the near future.

183 metre band regular Radio Utopia should be using a new transmitter soon, giving a little more power than is currently used. Usual frequencies are 1636 and 1648 kHz.

Staying in Holland and station Bravo Romeo was recently heard chatting with a Yugo pirate while away from the country, Greek pirate Radio Mousika Kareli has been busy putting some good signals onto 1636 kHz just recently.

In the United Kingdom MW activity continues at its snail pace levels with very little to report. Radio Blackbeard's flurry of activity on 1636 kHz seems to have temporarily ceased due to antenna problems and while UK Radio is still supposedly active on 1413 kHz, it is very difficult to hear him anyway. Transmitter power is said to be 30 watts but the antenna very inefficient.

Also in the UK, a station from the Midlands area continues to carry out test transmissions with about 20 watts on 1566 kHz. Various antenna adjustments have been in the last few weeks although the overall height is still very low.

Various interesting harmonics (the second frequency of stations which should be inaudible) have been heard recently. Irish pirate Radio North on 846 kHz was heard on 1692 kHz towards the end of May. In addition to this one, various legal stations have been heard with illicit signals as well, including a French station heard on 1643 kHz with a very strong signal at the beginning of July.

On Saturday night June 29th, a station was heard using 930 kHz but although the signal was strong, the audio was distorted. This could have been another harmonic or possibly an English pirate.

International Music Radio, famed for their shortwave transmissions recently made it onto MW with an announced power of 400 watts. 1645 kHz was used on Saturday night June 29th. It has since been revealed that this was a spoof via one of the Dutch pirates! ●

Pirate Chat Editor / Derek Taylor

SHORTWAVE NEWS

compiled and written

by the P.C. Editor

SUMMER is supposedly here and Free Radio on shortwave is beginning to bounce into action. The "SW Diary" which can be seen on the pages following this section will give you a rough idea of what has been happening and where it has been, while here I will take a closer look at exactly what stations have been doing and the more technical details.

76 metres

Regular readers will know that I have been campaigning for the increased awareness of this band since 1993! Finally, stations seem to be using the frequencies here to a greater extent and listeners appear to be tuning in as well. On almost every day of the week there is something to be heard, both daytime and night-time, allowing people at greater distance the chance to listen during darkness when propagation conditions are slightly more favourable.

There is no doubt that the country most widely represented on the band at the moment is the Netherlands. Stations are appearing from this country all of the time; although many of them are only QSOing they are tending to do this at other times to when stations want to air programmes which seems a sensible way of doing things. Stations currently on the band from this country include: *Red King, Jimmy, Pacman, Meteor, Moonlight, Kenwood, Select, Brigitte, Albatros, Transatlantic, Black Eagle, Santana, Delmare, Pionier, Daiwa, Delta, Boemerang* and *Centurion*. Of these, most are low power concerns. However, *Delmare* uses considerably more power, ensuring an enviably strong signal throughout the Continent. He is not active on the band too much but has recently been encouraged following the success of *Grensjager*.

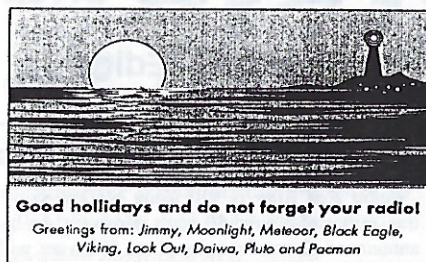
Delta and *Transatlantic* also use more than the average 20 watts or so of the others. Despite power differences, all are heard well here.

Radio Red King is still using his low power transmitter of around 10 watts. However, he has announced plans of running about 500 watts with programmes using 76 metres on a Sunday morning which should be taking place from August. This station has also used 48 metres recently with programmes resulting in a good response.



From somewhere around the Dutch / Belgian border is *Radio Grensjager* or *The Borderhunter* in English. This station is one of those helping to establish 76 metres, having carried out a large number of programmes on various days of week. We can expect to hear the station broadcasting from out in the woods usually on 3927 kHz from around midnight but sometimes from as early as 2230. Excellent signals have been heard along with very nice audio quality. Proving the fact are letters from listeners as far afield as Egypt and Israel as well as various parts of Russia. An old army transmitter is used and the antenna is a half-wave inverted V of a variable direction. Station operator Frans has been in the business for 15 years on FM, MW and SW. If he's not on SW, then check 1593 kHz MW as he might be on that channel!

Radio Meteor was raided on June 8th and a 1000 watt transmitter taken. However, the station has since returned to the air with the old 40 watt rig and has been heard with programmes.



Live Wire has been heard with several programmes and has received three letters from the USA in response to one of them. Excellent signals have been heard throughout Europe.

The most active station on the band from the UK at present is undoubtedly *Radio Armadillo*. As you will notice from the "SW Diary", he is very busy on 3947 kHz, sometimes for hours at a time, all live. Programmes contain a real mixture of music and are pretty entertaining; if you're ever after anything to listen to at night, this is the one.

Subterranean Sounds using around 15 watts of power has currently been running a rough schedule of a broadcast once every two weeks. 3920 kHz is a favourite frequency from about 0000 on Friday nights / Saturday mornings. If you have become tired with most stations sounding alike, SS will sound like a breath of fresh air. A mixture of jungle and jazz sounds very good in the sort of quality transmitted and certainly provides a very welcome change on the airwaves.

The Magic Spell is a station who when mentioned in the last issue of P.C. was only just getting things together. Since then various programmes have been aired, again differing from what we have become used to. This also fresh sounding station is nearly always active at night but is worth staying up for. Check 3927 or 3945 kHz for some entertaining transmissions.

The final regular broadcaster from the UK on 76 metres is *Radio Blackbeard*. The interesting thing here is that the operator combines the conventional Sunday morning listening spot with the less conventional 76 metres. However, 3911 kHz has proved successful so far, resulting in a bunch of telephone calls each time.

Radio Pamela made their return to the airwaves on June 1st, following Steve Most's marriage, not to Pamela but to somebody else! She apparently shares the radio interest and might be heard on

future broadcasts! 3945 kHz is the place to listen out.

Weekend Music Radio is still kicking about with the occasional live extravaganza. The early hours of May 27th saw Big Mouth and crew from *Radio Free London* hit the studio with a programme on 3910 kHz.

RFL is another who has cottoned on to the idea of 76 metres and were heard with their first broadcast on the band during the weekend of June 29th / 30th. 3945 kHz was used for the looptape programme. Let's just hope that the established names heard on the station will succeed in bringing a few more listeners to this obviously potentially popular band.

The German Free Radio scene on shortwave is not quite as prolific as past years and as a result, only a couple of stations from the country have been heard on 76. *Speedwing Radio* always seems to be about and listening, occasionally popping up for a chat with quite good signals into the UK with his ± 50 watt transmitter. *Radio Driland* is the other station, also with a good signal, but also endeavouring to broadcast programmes. Friday July 5th saw a fine broadcast, together with *Radio Powerplay*.

In Scandinavia, the only station active on 76 metres is *Starshine Radio*, who although has made some tests recently on 48 metres has decided to stick on 3 MHz. Operator Kim Hawk tells us of liking nothing better than coming on air during the evening, broadcasting a programme and following up with a chat to a few other operators, highlighting the relaxed and easy-going fashion that the band has brought about. Power here is 80 watts and the antenna a longwire. Signals into the UK are usually fairly good for the sing-a-long-an oldie shows!

48 metres

While 76 metres has been flourishing, little change has been taking place on 48 metres, despite a possible minor improvement in propagation conditions. However, as far as audiences in the UK are concerned, they must be a little perturbed by unstable signals. The problem is that although stations can be heard, there is a distinct lack of continuity in reception.

Despite the conditions, some continue to battle away but one who has relatively little problems no matter what conditions bring is *Radio Blue Star / Horizon / Bronzen Ster / Blauwe Vogel*.

There seems to be something of a mystery surrounding these stations as many listeners are not sure what is ever going on with them! Each of these have a different operator and each have their own transmitter; however, what invariably happens is the operators broadcast all together using just one of the rigs and the various operators announce their own identifications! This also explains various telephone numbers and various mailing addresses! The voice of the Blue Star might be familiar to some listeners as he used to run shortwave station *Radio Dutchboy*. Signals from each transmitter are always strong and modulation quality also very good for the most extremely mad-cap programmes around! Frequencies used tend to vary but are always between 6285 and 6300 kHz for the weekly Sunday broadcasts but also at other times as well.

Also from the Netherlands, *Radio Torenvalk* has now seemingly started with his bi-weekly Sunday morning transmissions on 6400 kHz. Signals here have been fairly good and it's nice to hear this most famous MW and SW pirate back with regular broadcasts.

Transatlantic Radio, more active on 76 metres than 48 metres has nonetheless been making broadcasts on 6 MHz. Transmitter problems have not helped but TBS is usually around 6260 kHz if he is broadcasting. A series of QSOs with International Music Radio have also recently taken place on 6955 USB.

From the United Kingdom, 6210 kHz has been hi-jacked by *Radio Free London* and *Weekend Music Radio* who are transmitting on alternate Sundays, both on loop tapes. It is thought that a move of channel to 6400 kHz for both stations is imminent. WMR has been heard on Saturday nights recently although he has been inaudible sometimes on Sunday mornings - this would suggest, as is the case, that 48 metres is actually more favourable during the evening rather than the morning. Both of these stations are using the same mobile telephone number and both boast to being on the Internet!

Ozone Radio International continue more or less weekly broadcasts although frequency choice often seems to be a problem. 6210 kHz had used to be the more or less regular channel but as this is no longer available it is often the case that Ozone is heard flitting about all over the band.

European Music Radio, the famous station from the 1970s is back! Several broadcasts have

been heard with the 100 watt transmitter and there are rumoured to be close links with newish station *Radio Crystal*.

UK Radio which first started out on MW in 1978 is now broadcasting nearly every Saturday and Sunday on 6266 kHz. The choice of frequency is not the best, but Paul Johnson has been putting a huge amount of hours in getting the station on the air.

Britain Radio International celebrated their 16th birthday on June 23rd which must make Roger Davis and Jayne members of one of Europe's oldest Free Radio stations. The frequency used for the programme was 6220 kHz, although BRI can usually be heard in the 6230 - 6235 kHz area.

Radio Pandora continue to receive letters from Europe for their Sunday morning broadcasts on 48 metres. 6200 and 6280 kHz are favourite channels. The last issue of P.C. reported plans for 76 metres; a test has been attempted but using a makeshift longwire instead of the half-wave dipole which the transmitter doesn't seem to like. Signals with the inferior antenna were only fair in the UK.

Radio Merlin International are still fighting their court case, revealed station operator Paul Watt in a recent telephone call to P.C. Last March he was involved in a serious road accident which left him with long-term injuries; however, despite this, Paul has plans to bring the station back to the airwaves at some point in the future.

From Ireland, *Jolly Roger Radio* continues to broadcast each and every Sunday, sometimes with own programmes but more often than not with relays for pop station *Laser Hot Hits*. Signals sometimes make it across the Irish Sea quite well.

The German scene on 48 metres is somewhat larger than on 76 metres with a host of stations audible usually at around 0800-0900 on Sunday mornings. *Star Club*, *Crazy Wave* and *Dr. Tim* are regulars. Frequencies to check include 6250, 6260 and 6270 kHz. *Level 48*, originating from Germany is said to have further expanded recently and could be carrying out an operation in the coming weeks. Don't forget that this is a conglomeration of stations who each transmit a programme, combining together to create one big station.

TURN OVER FOR THE "SW DIARY"

Shortwave Diary

an activity analysis

IN addition to the usual shortwave section, in which general news and information can be found, this issue sees the introduction of an idea never before seen in any Free Radio magazine. Rather than simply listing reams of boring logs with frequencies and dates, we present an overview and analysis of pirate activity on shortwave, together with editorial comment. This will hopefully succeed in painting a much clearer picture of what can be heard on the different bands and will provide a good impression of what has been happening in the pirate world. Not all station activity will be mentioned, just that which is thought to be of interest. Each installment of this new section will begin where the previous one left off. As this is the first, we will start from when the last magazine was issued at the end of April. Please note that if a station has been heard just after midnight British time, its entry into the diary will be made into that particular new day.

Thursday 25th April

Radio Grensjager livens up what would have otherwise been a non-eventful evening on the international pirate front. He is heard for about 90 minutes on 3927 from 2330 with the usual phenomenal signal and audio quality. A full programme in English before a QSO with **Radio Armadillo** who appears on his usual frequency 3947.

Sunday 28th April

The traditional SW pirate day of Sunday gets off to a good start on the not so traditional 76 metres. Just after midnight and on comes **Grensjager** to have a chat with **Communication**. The rest of Sunday is very much on the quiet side with the only real bit of interest coming in the way of a station called **Jolly Roger**. Nobody really knows who this is, although the one certainty is that it is not Joe Vincent from Eire. The oddball operator pops up during the afternoon on 3945 during a QSO between **Live Wire** and **Blackbeard**.

Saturday 4th May

Spring has sprung but does the shortwave pirate scene have any bounce? The afternoon is livened up with a **Radio Armadillo** broadcast on 3947. Mr. Armadillo has tried all manner of things during past months, including Saturday morning transmissions on 5824. Typical Armadillo wit and music are in full flow. As well as "The Medium A", **UWWS** are busy down the band on 3927 with more afternoon programmes.

Sunday 5th May

A hectic weekend is in store and kick-started by a superb sounding **Live Wire Radio** on 3920. His broadcasts have become synonymous with outstanding signals and audio quality and as Bill signs on just after midnight, the usual traits are evident. The station stays on the air until well after 0100 with live programmes, and a QSO with **SF03**, **Subterranean Sounds** and **Radio Pacman** ensues. Tuning the radio to 48 metres at around 1000 in the morning and the band sounds surprisingly busy.

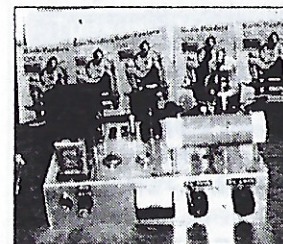
Pirate Chat

Firstly, **Horizon** are bombing the band on 6297 with programmes that must be the most outrageous 48 metres has heard in years. A packed studio is shouting and singing and a most enjoyable broadcast is heightened with the inclusion of live telephone calls, including one from yours truly. **Radio Free London** are bashing away on 6285 with fascinating comments from Big Mouth on our mailing address, and some nice P.C. plugs from Dave Martin. **Radio Pandora** fades in for a short time on 6280, and amongst other stations, it's nice to hear **BRI** are still active. The activity dies down late morning but is re-vitalised during the afternoon with a live broadcast from Germany. **Sud West Radio** are hardly shortwave regulars nowadays but it makes a change to hear them, especially at the unconventional time of mid-afternoon. Early evening and **Horizon** are still busy, but have moved down to 6284.

Monday 6th May

It's Bank Holiday Monday in the United Kingdom, a day that could always potentially be brilliant, but so often fails to sparkle. **Radio Armadillo** gets things under way with an hour long programme during the

early hours, but as ever, the remainder of the day is far from inspiring. The London crew are busy all day long on 6285 with 70s music but there is compensation for the lack of activity from Bank Holiday regular, Steve Midnight as **Subterranean Sounds** appears during the afternoon on 3920.



Radio Pandora transmitter

Wednesday 8th May

Weekdays sadly fail to produce a great deal on the international pirate scene which is a shame. There is no real reason for this as **Radio Meteor** and **Radio Santana** prove by having a chat during the early evening on 3910.

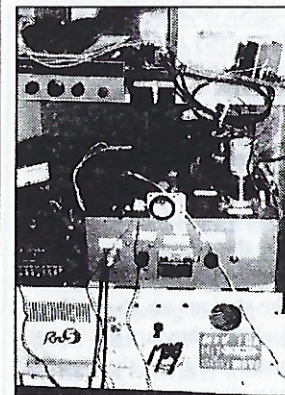
Thursday 9th May

Radio Armadillo is one of the few who sees no boundaries with regard to broadcasting times; Sunday morning is out but anything else is in. He broadcasts today with the new day arrival just after midnight.

Saturday 11th May

Here comes the weekend but what is in store for the shortwave pirate buffs?

We have to wait quite late before any real night-time, or early morning activity emerges. **Radio Armadillo** and **WMS** are busy chatting just after 0100, but at 0200, the first programmed broadcast of the weekend appears. Who else could it be but **Radio Grensjager** with a blinding signal on 3927? He plays a few records and is still on the air at 0330 talking to **Speedwing Radio** from Germany. At the more civilised hour of 1000, **Radio Blackbeard** is testing on 3911 and **Blue Star**. **Radio (Horizon)** is pumping away on 6285. Saturday has been pretty good so far, but more is to come. Before midnight, **Radio Blackbeard's** tests are put to good use with a full, long programme, emitting fine signals all over Europe. A telephone line is available and as usual, a number of people call in.



Radio Blackbeard transmitter

Pirate Chat

While this English station is operating, **Grensjager** and **Subterranean Sounds** both appear with programmes on 3927 and 3945 respectively. 76 metres is powering away, showing that it does not only have to be Sunday mornings when Free Radio can be heard on shortwave. The most interesting part of the night is yet to come, that being in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Sunday 12th May

Following **Subterranean Sounds**' broadcast, operator Steve tunes his radio to 76 metres to listen to any reports from other stations. He QSOs with **WMS (The Wizard's Magic Spell)** but during the chat he hears some voices on single sideband saying to each other that they can hear pirates on the frequency. Very interested in what is happening, Steve comes back on the frequency and calls to them. Within a few minutes, a UK pirate is chatting to a group of shipping vessel skippers located 150 miles off the west coast of Ireland! They say that they enjoy listening to the music from the stations on 76 metres and that they are not bothered in the slightest by any pirate activities! The time is now after 0300 and

the rest of Sunday fails to live up to the happenings of the early morning which is a shame - most of the shortwave Free Radio boffins will have been in bed at the time! There is a little interest during the day however - just before 1800 and **International Music Radio** are doing a joint broadcast with **Transatlantic Radio** on the interesting frequency of 3895. Staying with 76 metres and **Radio Free London** pop up just before the new day with a short test for the up-coming 3 MHz Saturday night service.

Monday 13th May

What's this - Free Radio activity on a weekday! Well certainly! **Radio Armadillo** just after midnight on 3947 and more maritime QSOs with **Subterranean**.

Wednesday 15th May

Midweek and not renowned for mass activity but as far as the Dutch are concerned, that does not matter, and indeed, why should it? Mid-afternoon and the powerhouse **Blue Star** is bombing away on 6286. A couple of hours later at around 1800 and 76 metres is the venue for a tasty QSO between **Meteoor, Boomerang, Transatlantic, Albatros**

and **Centurion**. Come 2320 and **Grensjager** has his own party going on 3927 with another fine programme before a chat with fellow pirate **Radio Albatros** who is on 3932 getting out an excellent signal.

Thursday 18th May

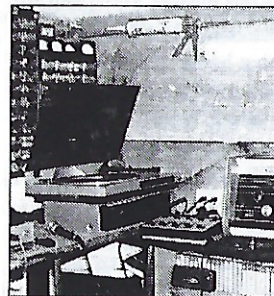
The activity keeps on rolling and the madcap crew at **Blue Star** are heard throughout the afternoon on 6296. **Armadillo** is heard at around 0130 with another early morning show!

Saturday 18th May

Yes, yes, yes! Another weekend and although the last few weekdays have been busy, surely today and tomorrow will produce even more activity. We get underway with the 76 metre stalwart **Armadillo** who puts up another superb performance on 3947, before **Grensjager** plays the return ball with a blinder on 3927 for nearly two hours! Next up is **Speedwing** with a quick report on 3927. Only three hours into the weekend, in fact most people would say it is still Friday night, but still, a handful of stations have already been busy. 12 hours later and some interest, again on 76 metres with a programme from **Radio Blackbeard** on 3911

Pirate Chat

and an interesting test from **Live Wire Radio** on 3920. **UK Radio** is busy during the morning and afternoon with his regular Saturday broadcasts on 6266. Come 2300 and the scene is cranking up for another potentially excellent Saturday night and Sunday morning. 76 metres is the band of course and the debutante tonight is **Transatlantic** who sets the standard for **Grensjager, Delta, Sierra Foxtrot Zero Three, Armadillo, The Magic Spell** and **Blackbeard** who all appear on the band during the course of the next few hours.



Radio Delta studio

Sunday 19th May

Well Sunday is here and what's happening on the bad old 48 metres? Actually, it's not as atrocious today as other Sundays. **Blue Star** gives us all the best broadcast of the day for about 12 hours; also busy on 6 MHz is **Radio Free London** who

become audible during the evening here in the UK. Relay rodents **Laser Hot Hits** are also active with programmes. By late evening salvation arrives with **The Borderhunter - Grensjager** is back on air with programmes for the third consecutive night running.

Tuesday 21st May

3920 kHz is the venue as the new day arrives - it's just gone midnight and 76 metre bad-boy Billy is busy with **Live Wire Radio**. A full programme ensues with superb signals and audio, and pudding after the main course is a nice fat QSO with **The Magic Spell** and **Armadillo**.

Thursday 23rd May

It might not be a conventional day for Free Radio activity on shortwave, but **Armadillo** and **The Magic Spell** take no notice as the former has a programmed broadcast from around 0030 and the latter joins in for a QSO after closedown.

Saturday 25th May

Another weekend has arrived and the early hours of this particular Saturday are privileged to host activity from **Armadillo, Live Wire, The Magic Spell, Sierra Foxtrot Zero Three** and **Subterranean Sounds** - where else but 76 metres on various frequencies between 3911 and 3947. Later in the day, although they are not heard here, it is supposed that **UK Radio** are busy on 6266 with regular Saturday programmes. One thing for sure is that by 2330, **Grensjager** is booming away on 3927, this being the prelude for another potentially super-active Bank Holiday weekend.

Sunday 26th May

Grensjager's late night broadcast seems to have prompted **Armadillo** back onto the air again, only to be outgunned by a phenomenal sounding **Live Wire** who is back with another programme - Bill is active for a couple of hours with a truly international sounding broadcast which not only serves as a tremendous advert for this kind of radio, but also puts some of the other stations well and truly to shame. **Weekend Music Radio** makes a much welcomed return to 76 metres today during the early hours and is heard live until after 0400! Some of the **RFL** mob are infesting the studio but apart from that it is quite interesting to hear **WMR** back! Sadly, the rest of the day is largely a bore, the only interest being **Transatlantic** on 3895.

Pirate Chat

Monday 27th May

Another Bank Holiday here in the United Kingdom, which just as most days, gets underway with night-time 76 metre activity. Today it all begins on the Continent as it is **Radio Delmare** who is responsible for firing up some busyness. He is heard with an almighty whopper on 3927 - operator. Frank, is testing his transmitter, and is told of its superior working by **Albatros** who pops up on 3932 with a report. One of the highlights of the day soon arrives as The Wizard is heard with a programme on **The Magic Spell** for the first time in absolutely ages. 3927 is the frequency again and the signal and audio quite impressive for about 50 minutes of broadcasting. Only two hours into the Bank Holiday and the fourth station of the day appears on 76 metres - **Speedwing Radio** gives a report to WMS and then airs his first major programme. Later in the day and a few stations can be heard puffing along on 48 metres! Actually, propagation isn't too bad on the band today and **Britain Radio** and **Weekend Music Radio** prove the fact, as do Dutch favourites **Tonair** and **Torenvalk** who are heard

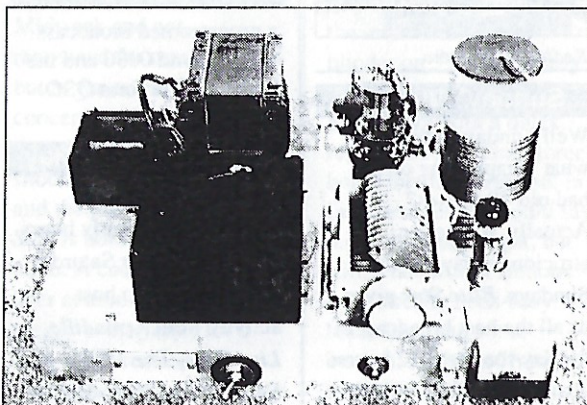
talking to each other. There is more to come, however, as the afternoon is brightened by Bank Holiday pro Steve Midnight - he gets **Subterranean Sounds** on the air from around 1430 on 3911. The reception in the UK is very good and the usual fine programming is heard, be it with a few technical probs!

Wednesday 29th May

Today is quiet but enhanced by the **Grensjager** hiding in the Belgian woods with another late night programme on 3920.

Thursday 30th May

This day of the week is regaining its old status as being the main weekday for pirate activity; tonight sees **Blackbeard**, **Grensjager** and **Albatros** each with their own programmes. **Blackbeard** being heard as early as 2130.



The Magic Spell transmitter

Friday 31st May

The weekend approaches and at midnight, 76 metres starts livening up. Some would regard it as still being Thursday night, but emergence of the new day sees **Subterranean Sounds** embark on the first of three sequential late-night broadcasts - the reason being that Bill Lewis from **Live Wire** is in the studio.

Saturday 1st June

Subterranean kick starts proceedings today, signing on 3945 just after midnight. A fine broadcast ensues and an appearance from Dutch pirate **Red King** pleases Steve and Bill immensely as he reports that he has listened to the whole programme. Later in the day at the more sociable hour of 1630, a slight surprise on 3945 as Steve Most makes his return with **Radio Pamela**.

Sunday 2nd June

Sunday - the traditional day of Free Radio throughout Europe, and what will be on offer today? As if we can't guess, **Subterranean** appears just after midnight for the third of his joint programmes with **Live Wire** Bill. The pair joyfully occupy 3920 for a couple of hours, until **Armadillo** takes over on 3947. Following this, **The Magic Spell** gives us a brief showing on 3927 before **Armadillo** continues until around 0330! 1000-1400 have always been the favourite times for Sunday illicit radio, but that is no longer the case. By 0330 today, we have heard three and a half hours of continuous broadcasting courtesy of three different stations, and the day has hardly begun. This is quite fascinating, considering that propagation is so poor on the old favourite 48 metres, that very little else is heard all day.

Saturday 8th June

It is quiet on the bands, probably due to the large static levels because of the rain and thunder throughout Europe. **Armadillo** is one of the few who braves the storms during the small hours on 3947.

Sunday 9th June

Unluckily for the shortwave freaks, static levels continue to ride high, this making listening during darkness particularly difficult. However, **The Magic Spell** gets away with it on 3927 for around an hour from 0050. Later in the day and the majority of fuss is on 48 metres. Propagation on the band is unusually good

Pirate Chat

Monday 3rd June

It's nice to hear an evening transmission today from **Radio Red King**. His voice is more familiar on mediumwave, but nevertheless his broadcasts on shortwave are just as enjoyable - we hear him today from 2320 on 3922 with a fine signal. As he closes down, new recruit to the 76 metre band, **Radio Brigitte** appears on 3924 for a test transmission and QSO.

Wednesday 5th June

Radio Grensjager is heard on 3920 around midnight, and told by **Sierra Foxtrot Zero Three** that his audio quality this morning is as good as that of the World Service! A few minutes before 0100 sees **The Magic Spell** sign up on 3945 for a fine live programme until 0145 when **Armadillo** takes the channel firstly for a chat with his colleague and then for a programme until 0332!

Wednesday 12th June

Around 1130 and **Grensjager** is on his now usual frequency 3927. He has a chat with **International Music Radio** who returns to the 76 metre band.

Thursday 13th June

Tonight is not really programme night as this usually comes on either Friday night or Saturday night. Instead, it is time for a chat - partakers include **Grensjager**, **Brigitte**, **Red King**, **IMR**, **Albatros** and **Driland**.

Friday 14th June

1400 and **Radio Armadillo** can be heard with a programme on 3947.

today, and amongst those making the most of it are **Blue Star**, returning after an absence of several weeks, **Weekend Music Radio**, making another of their regular appearances on 6210, **Radio Recharge International**, with a quite enjoyable show via **WMR** and **Radio Crystal**. Later in the day, 76 metres houses **Grensjager** and **Radio Driland** who make it onto 3927 with fine signals and good modulation.

Tuesday 11th June

Just before midnight and **Radio Red King** is calling for **The Magic Spell** on 3923. Up comes the Wizard, firstly for a QSO and later a programme.

Saturday 15th June

By 0200, four stations have aired programmes on the 76 metre band - *Grensjager*, *Subterranean Sounds*, *Radio Armadillo* and *The Magic Spell*. *Speedwing Radio* has also been heard. During the daytime, *UK Radio* is heard on 6266 but it is not until night-time when much else is heard.

Sunday 16th June

Subterranean Sounds is back again just after midnight as the previous night saw a few technical problems. *Grensjager* makes another appearance at the same time and as he closes, a QSO is triggered. Participants include: *Live Wire*, *Starshine*, *Red King* and *WMS*. Later in the day on 48 metres includes broadcasts from weekly regulars *Ozone*, bi-weekly broadcasters *Radio Free London*, *Radio Pandora*, *UK Radio*, *Blue Star* etc. *Grensjager* is back during the evening for a third successive night-time transmission.

Wednesday 19th June

It's QSO time today as some Dutch regulars have a chat with each other during the early evening - *Meteoor*, *Jimmy*, *Black Eagle*, *Santana* and *Albatros* can be heard on frequencies between 3910 and 3932 kHz.

Thursday 20th June

Two programmes are heard on the shortwave Free Radio scene today - *Armadillo* at 0040 and *Grensjager* at 2215 on 3947 and 3927 respectively.

Friday 21st June

Interest today starts just after midnight with *Live Wire* talking to *International Music Radio* and *Radio Brigitte*, followed up with a tasty programme on 3927 kHz. As this concludes, *The Magic Spell* joins in with the fun for a quick chin-wag, as does a listener in the north-west of England who is testing out his transceiver in AM mode and being heard quite well! Later in the day, *Radio Delta* from Holland makes an increasingly rare appearance on SW and *Transatlantic* is also heard, both on 76 metres.

Sunday 23rd June

Radio Pacman is heard with a short programme on 3945 as the new day falls. At the same time, *Grensjager* and *Albatros* are also heard with music shows on 76 metres. As *The Borderhunter* closes, a huge and rather rare QSO ensues. Participants include: *Live Wire*, *Sierra Foxtrot*, *International Music Radio*, *Albatros*,

Radio Delmare, *The Magic Spell*, *Foxtrot Romeo* and *Red King*. The QSO was rare because of its time of staging. Saturday night / Sunday morning usually sees a host of programmes, but this made a nice change. Later on, 48 metres is buzzing, starting with a bunch of German stations, progressing to *Britain Radio's* 16 birthday show, a bi-weekly programme from *Radio Torenvalk* on 6399 and a very brief appearance from *European Music Radio* on 6304. *Weekend Music Radio*, *UK Radio*, *Ozone*, *Blue Star*, *Jolly Roger* and *Driland* are also heard at the P.C. listening post.

Thursday 27th June

During the daytime on 6285 kHz, *Blue Star* is heard with a programme. As darkness falls, a new addition to 76 metres is heard with *Radio Pionier* who is chatting to *Transatlantic* and *Brigitte*.

Saturday 29th June

Blue Star is back again with more crazy antics, this time on 6300 kHz. Night-time sees the awaited re-emergence of *Radio Free London* on 76 metres. Good signals are heard across Europe. Also on the band from 2200 is *Starshine Radio*. ●

It's not only what you listen to... it's also how you listen to it!!!

RECEIVERS

Portables

Problematic... Unless they are operated well, with some know-how and good aerials, antenna tuning units etc, they are prone to 'overloading' when a good antenna is connected. 'Overloading' happens when a receiver starts producing signals and / or noise that are not actually there on that frequency. This is because a portable is simply not as capable as a more expensive 'base' receiver, where this problem will generally not exist. Such 'overloading' problems with portables can be reduced by switching the attenuator (sometimes marked DX / local) or adding an ATU. However, by attenuating the signal, you are in effect losing some of it, unlike with a better receiver. Of course, portables will have little 'overloading' problems using the set's telescopic antenna, which is what these radios are designed to be used with, but you will never get the best signal that could be received from the station you are listening to. Some may feel that a station should put out a strong enough signal to be heard on a telescopic, however, this is totally missing the point! You will still be getting an inferior signal! A shortwave aerial needs to be relatively long because the shortwave bands themselves are made up of many wavelengths (metres) and an aerial's efficiency is related to it's wavelength. Hence on FM you can get away with small aerials due to smaller wavelengths.

Base Receivers

A vast range of receivers fall into this category from around £400 for the Lowe HF-150 (some would say this one

is a portable), up to thousands of pounds for a professional receiver. The Lowe HF-225 is (probably) the first radio that you will come to that starts to take on the guise of being a 'serious' receiver (it sells for around £500). Such receivers are (generally) quite friendly to whatever type of decent antenna you choose to use, with little if no signs of 'overloading'. Simply, it is designed for such 'proper' antennas to be used with it. It will be more sensitive (the ability to hear weaker signals) and more selective (the ability to separate nearby stations), plus many other factors which are perhaps less obvious. These abilities will slowly increase for the more money you spend!

Valved Receivers

The classic Racal series are well known (the Pirate Chat editor has one!) and valves are by nature more user-friendly and are less prone to 'overloading'. You could spend £200 on a Racal (second-hand) and experience less problems than you would find on a modern transistorised portable at the same cost.

Conclusion

Portables, in knowledgeable hands, can work fairly well but it is perhaps ironic that this knowledge often comes from using a more expensive receiver! For receiving pirate stations (remember a receiver will require greater ability to hear low power signals well), I think I would skip portables (and that comes from someone who used one for some time, to the best of its ability!). Look at the base receivers instead. You will not regret it and you'll learn more about radio generally by using a better receiver.

Of course, we are talking about an outlay of some money, so you might want to seek out second-hand radios found advertised in Practical Wireless and Short Wave Magazine, for example. If you still find that's beyond your budget, seek out those valved sets (also advertised in such magazines). Such radios might not 'sing and dance' but they are good value for money.

ANTENNAS

Part of the reasons for using 'proper' external aerials have already been touched on. Really there are two main types for shortwave listening:

1:

A half-wave dipole or inverted V dipole (much the same thing!)

The best antenna, with better signals and less noise. The dipole is two horizontal (specific) lengths of wire that go to a 50 or 75 ohm co-axial cable; one wire is connected to the co-axial's inner core while the other wire is connected to the co-axial's outer mesh (braid). The other ends of the wires go to nylon cords which go to a fence / tree / mast / house etc. The other end of the co-axial cable goes to the receiver's antenna socket. For 76 metres, each wire length is around 58 feet, and for 48 metres, around 37 feet each. The co-axial can be of any length. I say 'around' for the wires because there is a fair margin for error. The dipole will give near perfect results on the band for which it is designed but will not be so good on other bands. You could make a 48 metre band dipole and then add (by twisting or soldering wires) an extra 20 feet each side for 76 metre band reception. However, the 20 feet of wire will then need connecting or disconnecting depending on which band you wish to listen to. Of course, you could always have two separate

dipoles (one some way under the other) but this might present more problems than the practical approach I've just described! Although, in theory, the dipole wires should run in a straight line, liberties can be taken. If you don't think you have space, then you can make space by dropping the ends of the wires vertically, or even sideways. Do avoid bending wires back on themselves though. Centre connections on dipoles should be waterproofed. You can use silicone sealant around the exposed joints. You'll know if the weather has got to it as the wire(s) will go black.

2:

The end-fed wire antenna

Usually referred to as a 'longwire' but a true longwire has to be fairly long in terms of wavelength before it actually is a longwire! The end-fed is perhaps the easiest antenna to construct, not as good for a specific band as a dipole, but can still be quite effective. Take a random length of wire and connect it directly to your receiver or ATU / balun. Take the other end of the wire to the end of your garden or wherever you can, and connect it via a nylon cord (or string) to a fencepost, or whatever. A ground connection should also be made, using a *short* length of wire from the receiver or ATU / balun to a metal / copper pipe driven several feet into the earth outside your listening room. This sort of connection can help to reduce noise. To make the most of your end-fed wire antenna, add in a good antenna tuning unit, or a longwire balun. Such devices will aid reception very well. Lake Electronics in Nottingham sell a value for money balun that works fairly well for less than £8! As with dipoles, end-fed wires can also be bent downwards or sideways to make more space but again, avoid bending wires back on themselves! ▶

Indoor Antennas

The only time you should consider an indoor antenna is when you have absolutely no room elsewhere. Try running a length of wire around a curtain rail and / or elsewhere, especially upstairs. In this situation, an ATU or balun is even more essential.

Conclusion

Perhaps for many people, the end-fed wire antenna is easier to make. Whatever antenna you choose, mount it as high as is practical (don't try for another five feet of height if it means risking breaking your neck! - such small changes won't make much difference anyway). Even low antennas (that is, around several feet high) can work well. Do remember that there is no need to buy a ready-made aerial as a properly constructed home-made one will work just as well, and usually better. Aerial-making really isn't so difficult, and you'll find the more you construct them, the easier it will become. Never make the error of believing that a set's telescopic is suitable for pirate reception. I can understand why some might think it to be acceptable, but you are being misled.

LISTENING

So you have your receiver and your antenna - that's all isn't it?! Almost, but not quite - we still have some basic listening skills to discuss. Your receiver will have some filters on it; these are used to reduce interference from nearby stations. Use the widest filter that is compatible with little or no interference and still gives a good sound quality; of course, if the going gets tough, then you'll have to use a narrower filter. There are a number (not all) of pirate stations on shortwave (especially some of those found on 76 metres) who have a very good sound

quality (notably better than your local MW stations!), yet many listeners never reap the full benefits. Often the small speaker on a shortwave radio does little justice to a station's sound quality. For better sound, use (experiment if need be) an external (bigger) loudspeaker, or plug your shortwave receiver into your hi-fi! The sound will be bigger and better. Increase the clarity by listening to a station around 1 to 2 kHz off its actual frequency; this technique can also be employed to reduce interference as well!

NOTES

Antenna diagrams and more information can be found in the following book (especially the first chapter!), which is simple enough, costs little and avoids theory - 'Aerial Projects' by R.A. Penfold. The book and indeed parts for aerials are available from most Maplin Electronics stores, who run a mail order service as well as having shops across the U.K. Their huge catalogue can be found in your local W.H. Smith. The balun for end-fed wires (order as CT400 Antenna Coupling Transformer) from Lake Electronics, 7 Middleton Close, Nuthall, Nottingham, NG16 1BX. It costs £7.75 inclusive. I also note that 'Aerial Projects' is available through Short Wave Magazine's book service. Lastly, whilst it is beyond the scope of this article to give finer details on some of the items discussed, should you find yourself stuck on anything, then do feel free to contact the Pirate Chat editor or I for help, which is freely available and will be happily given. ●

Technical Correspondent for Pirate Chat (June 1996)

Head in the sand

the sad story of somebody who will not listen to reason and try to understand...

AS many people will recall from previous issues of *Pirate Chat*, dating back to 1993, we have been running a campaign to heighten awareness of and activity on the 76 metre band. Due to the solar cycle and current propagation conditions, the traditional Free Radio band of 48 metres is far from as reliable as it was during its hey-day, contrasting significantly to our favoured band which due to its lower frequencies is far less susceptible to the inconsistencies.

Our last issue contained a two page article discussing the merits of 76 metres and explaining in a rational way just why people should start paying a little more attention to the band. Following our promotion, we have received many letters of support from listeners

"Reception on 76 metres has never been better as we are right at the minimum of the solar cycle"...

"76 metres is certainly worth a recommendation as 48 metres continues to be unpredictable"...

"It's really a shame that so few DXers tune in to 76 metres"...

"There is little point in continuing listening to a band purely because of tradition if conditions are bad"... and the list goes on.

It is also interesting to note how activity levels have recently increased on the band (see SW Diary). However, despite all of this support for what we have said, one person out in Scandinavia seems to have got a little upset and even resorted to personal attack upon myself by way of a particularly vicious piece of miss-informed writing. This person is Stefan, the editor of a magazine called *Pirate*

Connection - some of you might have heard of this publication, but others will not because it tends to get very little publicity on the Free Radio scene.

For some reason, Stefan has seen fit to totally dismiss all I have said, despite my close following of propagation on both 48 metres and 76 metres; for many years I have observed trends on both bands and have listened for many hundreds of hours, eventually leading to the conclusions that I put forward in the last issue.

Stefan's article on my thoughts was entitled *Cries From The Sandpit*, this most probably arising from my being younger than him and his jealousy of being unable to comprehend different concepts despite his extra years. He claimed in this disgrace to Free Radio reporting that *"I have never read anything more stupid..."* and goes on to discuss the reasons for this, missing my main points completely. Surely in such an area as Free Radio, free speech should not be a problem - my job as editor of *Pirate Chat* is to inform to the greatest extent possible. I do this and I am ridiculed by somebody who clearly has a particularly limited understanding of what I am discussing.

One point that Stefan seemed almost possessed with during his rantings is 76 metres and daytime; he seems to think that I stated 76 metres should replace 48 metres as a daytime band. Perhaps he should read my considered writing a little more carefully because I actually said that reception was possible during daytime and night-time hours and that here in England, both times of the day provide superior reception over 48 metres. For some reason, Stefan seems unable to respect my views and comprehend them, despite his living hundreds of miles away from the country to which I am referring.

Perhaps if Scandinavia had a better Free Radio scene where stations broadcast during the daytime other than on a Sunday morning such as here in the UK, he would not be moaning so much. Here, stations are active progressively more and more outside of Sunday morning and for those that do not particularly want an audience outside of the UK, daytime on 76 metres is ideal. *Subterranean Sounds* is one such station and has carried out some successful Bank Holiday daytime transmissions on the band which have been heard very well in the UK. If the station had been broadcasting on 48 metres instead of 76 metres, reception would have been much different and due to poor propagation we would have been lucky to hear him at all. Unfortunately, Stefan seems unable to understand this and has launched his own quest to stick with 48 metres because *"there is a lot of tradition connected to this band."* This idea is ludicrous! If I were a fisherman and had a boat that I had used every week for the last ten years and it suddenly sprung a leak, would I simply ignore the hole and carry on, eventually drowning? Of course not! Why then do people like Stefan want to carry on using a band that is largely useless in some parts of Europe? In a few years 48 metres will recover from poor propagation but only when that happens will it be time to broadcast on the band - meanwhile, 76 metres should take over, and whether Stefan likes it or not, this is what is happening.

It is interesting to note that in his nice little magazine, Stefan has omitted details in his *Euro Pirate Scene* section about stations that have been active on 76 metres. There is no mention of *Live Wire Radio*, *Subterranean Sounds*, *Radio Armadillo*, *The Magic Spell*, *Radio Grensjager*, *Radio Albatros* etc. All of these have been totally ignored, yet all have been heard regularly with fine programmes and good signals throughout Europe. I wonder Stefan what sort of radio and aerial system you have?

A further point that his so-called article discusses is that many of the stations on 76 metres are only QSOing with no programmes.

Such a notion only proves the fact that he must never even listen to the band, thus invalidating his criticisms even further. *Radio Grensjager* is heard with international programmes at least three days a week as are many other stations operational on the band. QSOs do exist, but these are mainly taking place at other times to when programmed broadcasts are aired. 76 metres has organisation - QSOs can mainly be heard on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and the remainder of the time is set aside for programmes. 48 metres, in contrast, is a conglomeration of everything, all crammed into a Sunday morning. What do you prefer? QSOs and programmes spread out over the week at various times of the day so that you can choose what you listen to, or everything at once in the space of a few hours on a Sunday morning?

The issue of mail was also brought up by Stefan, his claiming that he has heard various stations complaining of a lack of letters. He cites *Radio Pirana International* and *Radio Fusion International* as two of those who receive no letters - this is hardly surprising - the operator of RPI is now living in South America and no longer broadcasting on the band and RFI hasn't been on 76 for a considerable time anyway - this again detracts from what Stefan is half-heartedly trying to say as it becomes obvious that he rarely listens to the band. How can he even attempt to criticise my considered judgments if he doesn't even listen? A further point that leads me to this conclusion is how he has incorporated 19 pages of logs (!) into his magazine, every single one of them taken from the SRS news-sheets - he hasn't even bothered to re-type them - all are printed just as the original. Here in *Pirate Chat*, I actually listen to the radio and hear things for myself without having to rely on what can often be the inaccurate information of other people.

As Stefan's writing continues, he says something which really makes me wonder what on earth he is talking about - he says that if signals on 48 metres are a problem, stations should increase their power - how ridiculous!

He is almost admitting that propagation is poor but because his head is buried deep in the sand, he believes that instead of changing to a band where propagation is far more reliable, station operators should risk running higher power instead. This means that they consequently stand a higher chance of causing local interference and thus eventually being apprehended - all this instead of changing to a different frequency! He then goes on to discuss the transmitting equipment of stations on 76 metres stating that it is inferior. What a joke! He believes that most stations are using ham transmitters and no more than 50 watts which he thinks are not good enough for reception on the Continent. Firstly, I will correct Stefan by telling him that only one or a maximum of two stations on 76 metres are using ham transmitters, which is largely irrelevant anyway, and I will then tell him that the two most powerful pirates in Europe are active on the band! *Live Wire Radio* and *Radio Grensjager* have phenomenal signals throughout Europe and beyond. LWR has recently received three letters from the USA and Grensjager has received mail from as far away as Egypt and Israel, in addition to a large quantity of letters from Europe. This is not to say that only high power is efficient on 76 metres - far from it. *Subterranean Sounds*, *Radio Armadillo*, *The Magic Spell*, *Radio Albatros*, *Radio Red King*, *Radio Meteor*, *Radio Black Eagle*, *Radio Jimmy*, *Radio Santana* etc are all running ± 20 watts and all are heard well throughout the Continent. I have regular contact with many of these people and know the facts, something that Stefan, while he is busy criticising me seems to have forgotten.

I had previously regarded Stefan as the editor of *Pirate Connection* as a very well informed person who understands what is happening on the Free Radio scene. However, no longer can I believe this. He has proved in his inaccurate article that he hardly listens to stations on any band and has to rely on guess work half of the time. He seems to get carried away too often. Take his page *On The Market*.

This reports of what publications are currently available for the Free Radio listener. Of course, he could not resist mentioning *Pirate Chat* (he even named his magazine PC after us) in a derogatory fashion, picking up the point that there is too much Dutch MW news in the magazine. Again, he is getting confused - the last issue of *Pirate Chat* contained ONE page of MW news, three quarters of which was regarding the Dutch scene - if this is too much for you to read Stefan, I think you must have some sort of problem! He seems to think I wrote four articles about my travels to the Netherlands where I met various station operators - anybody who can count properly will only find two articles. Perhaps Stefan has got us confused with another magazine? He thinks *Pirate Chat* costs £2 for a sample - as you can see on page two, it actually costs £1.50, half the price of his magazine. All of these mistakes, and how many more are there in *Pirate Connection*? Lots - he believes *Live Wire Radio* to be a member of *Level 48* which he most certainly is not, and he seems to think he has heard *Radio Blackbeard* with two watts on 48 metres. If this really is true it serves only to confirm my stating that skip on the band is often long, making 48 metres unsuitable for use in the UK. With so much inaccuracy, his article about me hardly stands up. I have no need to justify myself anyway - I listen to Free Radio on every band and I know what I can hear best - I talk to Free Radio operators in this country most days of the week and I know which band they believe to be best - I have regular contact with Continental stations and I know which band they believe to be best - I have received letters of support from readers who agree with me. Perhaps it is time that YOU got your head out of the sand Stefan and stopped living in the past. Stop messing about with 48 metres and listen where the real interest and excitement can be found on 76 metres. If only you did this, perhaps then you would understand just what it is that I've been talking about not only in the last issue of *Pirate Chat* but also prior to my closure of the magazine and as early as 1993. ●

Offshore Radio lives on?

a look at the new type of offshore pirate

THE term offshore radio immediately conjures up impressions of stations such as Caroline, Northsea and London, pioneers of the pirate world back in the 1960s. While these stations have died and broadcasters in international waters are nearly a thing of the past, a new wave of offshore radio has recently hit the shortwave bands.

Mediumwave might be the tradition for this kind of radio, but the new breed of offshore broadcasters are not quite the norm.

These stations can be heard most nights of the week on the 76 metre band, broadcasting always in single side band mode on either 3939 or 3945 kHz. There are not dozens of slick DJs playing the latest music, but most of the time they are simply talking to each other.

Out in the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Ireland are a group of fishing vessels; the skippers on board the ships use 76 metres at night to occupy themselves, but it is thought that although they are licensed to transmit, the frequencies being used are not where they should be!

There are several of these offshore stations currently on air and although they have been broadcasting for some time, it was only recently that more information has been discovered. During the early hours of May 12th following a broadcast from

Subterranean Sounds, the station operator was talking to *The Magic Spell* when he heard the trawlermen talking about a pirate station on the frequency. *Subterranean Sounds* then called out for the trawlermen and within a few minutes he was chatting away to them. They revealed how they listen to the other pirates on the band regularly and enjoy the programmes! This was just the beginning though...

Since that first chat the trawlermen have actually been heard playing music to each other and have even asked some of the 76 metre band operators to play records for them.

A new breed of offshore radio is here! There might not be a bell at the top of the hour and famous presenters might not grace the microphones but this is the closest thing to pirate broadcasting from international waters for many years.

Another point about these stations is that whenever somebody is on the band playing music the trawlermen are nearly always listening, thus guaranteeing an audience of ordinary listeners for other station operators.

If you want to experience a step back in time and a step into the future all at once, the offshore trawlermen should provide the ideal stepping stone. Conversation and music not from the North Sea but from the Atlantic Ocean should be a must for anybody who claims an interest in offshore radio! ●

Pirate Chat

"I'm very happy with the return of your fantastic magazine... I wish you all the best in the future."

Jos Massot, Belgium

Thank you for your encouraging comments and continued support - Ed.

"It's very nice to have P.C. back in circulation. Very welcome, and this certainly fills a cultural and information gap. Let's hope we can encourage you to continue regularly. The old rate of publication would be a good thing but if you're not feeling up to that, I hope that you will consider publishing a new issue every three months or so. The format is fine. I won't miss a detailed list of loggings as the news section with details of individual SW stations can tell us everything that is relevant... The behind the scenes articles like your story of your Dutch tours are very good things. If you can persuade your US contacts to try writing similar things about the US SW scene, that would be equally valuable... 76 metres is certainly worth recommendation as 48 metres continues to be unpredictable. It shouldn't be oversold though as it has its own problems like limited international long-distance reliability and high noise levels during daylight hours. Pirates who try it at traditional 48 metre hours will probably be disappointed with results."

John Campbell, England

It's always very nice to receive a letter from somebody who appreciates all of the hard work, time and effort that goes in to putting a magazine such as Pirate Chat together. Some readers seem to take it all for granted, this being one of the reasons

that the mag disappeared for a couple of years. All of your comments are highly valued. I agree with you on the loggings syndrome - some magazines seem obsessed with printing sometimes ten or twenty pages of the things and as they can never all be up to date, the whole process is rendered totally useless. As you will see, the "SW Diary" is the replacement in PC, this combining the basic idea of the log but expanding it greatly to give an overall impression of what's been happening. More behind the scenes articles are planned and as you will see, some are in this issue. I will follow up the idea with the US scene. Your 76 metre comments are entirely in keeping with my own - 48 metres is currently so up and down that nobody knows what they will hear, contrasting with 76 metres where predictability is vastly increased. The long-distance daytime reliability debate can be used against the band, but if every country had a real pirate scene such as in the UK, this would sort itself out anyway. Noise levels can be higher on 76 metres during the daytime, but then again, general interference is drastically lower than on bands such as 48 metres and signals over a shorter distance are better anyway. The point we should all remember is that while 48 metres is the established and recognised band for Free Radio broadcasting, propagation is such that the band is currently too unpredictable - 76 metres is much more worthwhile, with greater stability and possibility for coverage of the whole of Europe and beyond during darkness. Some people say that it is an inconvenience to listen at night, but unlike yourself, Mr. Campbell, such people cannot be real listeners and the sort of people I would wish to have in an ideal Free Radio scene. - Ed.

"What a surprise today - I really was not thinking that there were going to be any more Pirate Chats... Congratulations on your very good and interesting history of your travel to pirate land, Holland - it's like a dream. Unfortunately, I have something not so nice to tell you - your style of talking about the "so-called" studio pirates and the relays over the Shortwave Radio Switzerland via IRRS is a little bad."

Firstly, Free Radio is not only possible with your own transmitter - sometimes you can find a much better programme from such a station than one with its own transmitter. What I think is most important is that Free Radio is a very special way of life - you have to have the idea in your heart and with the help of the radio, you can bring this to your friends and it is not important whether it be with your own transmitter or via a relay!..."

Yves Wechlin, Germany

It's always nice to hear from you and I am pleased of your enthusiasm for the return of PC. The articles regarding trips to the Netherlands seem to have gone down very well with most readers and more of this is planned for the future. Hearing stations is one thing, but reading in great details about their antics behind the scenes is another! Regarding the IRRS, the comments you read in the last issue were not actually written by me, but by Mr. Augustsson. However, I can understand both his and your point of view. A station can be Free whether it is broadcasting with its own transmitter or with that of somebody else, but the point being made is that the IRRS is basically legal which has the effect of detracting from the validity of Free Radio stations using the facilities. Your point, however, is clearly understood and perhaps the readers can supply more ideas? - Ed.

"Well, well, well - so you think that after two years of complete nothingness, you can suddenly swan back onto the Free Radio scene as if nothing had ever happened do you?!?! Er, well, yes you can actually! It's great to have Pirate Chat back again - I have to say that I missed it, although I fully understand and sympathise with your reasons for going A.W.O.L. Free Radio broadcasting is seriously lacking (with one or two notable exceptions) in youthfulness, adventurousness and energy at present, particularly on the shortwave. Maybe P.C.'s re-emergence can gradually help to alter that..."

Terry Starr, England

Thanks for another fine letter Terry! I'm glad you appreciate our turning up again and that you comprehend the reasoning. It's nice to read a letter from somebody who has the same sentiments as myself. Free Radio needs a serious boosting of vitality and vigour to restore it to previous exuberant levels. Hopefully, some of our ideas will help to do this. - Ed.

"...The best thing about the "new" Pirate Chat is that you've stopped including all those logs! It's much more interesting with in-depth articles. I hope you'll continue in the same way and become a publication for features and debate... I can tell you that I agree with you when you say the 48 metre band should be left in favour of the 76 metre band. I stopped listening more than one year ago because of the awful conditions... I can't hear too much on 76 metres during daytime because the propagation to the Netherlands and the UK isn't so good at that time, but at night-time the stations on 76 are blasting in at my QTH..."

Kai Salve Salvesen, Norway

The logs are gone Kai, and I think PC now looks much improved - features are the way to go, just as you've noticed. Loggings are a thing of the past - it's time to move forward. Hopefully you will enjoy the features in this issue, and those in the next issue which will include another helping of background from the Dutch pirates as I'm off over there on holiday again! Your comments about 76 metres are particularly interesting, especially considering your location in Scandinavia. As you will see, this issue includes an article about the editor of Pirate Connection, who wrote in his magazine that I was talking rubbish about 76 metres being such a good band. You live in the same part of Europe that he does, and you have no problem! Some people really are too stuck in their ways and never want to change, but as you say, things must move on.

Keep your letters coming - all your points are most welcome, on the subjects mentioned here, or on any topic that interests you. ●